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SUBJECT: US PRESIDENT BUSH'S STATEMENTS ON IRAQ; GLOBAL WAR ON
TERRORISM; DR PARROT TO BUENOS AIRES; ECUADORIAN ELECTIONS;
10/20/06; BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Key international stories today include US President George W. Bush's statement about a possible parallel between the rise in violence in Iraq and the 1968 Communist Tet offensive; an Argentine-Bolivian gas deal worth 17 billion dollars; the role to be played by the 'Coalition of the Willing' in the Global War on Terror; and Dr. Wayne Parrot's press round table in Buenos Aires. Daily-of-record "La Nacion" carries an editorial highlighting the polarization in the Ecuadorian runoff election.

2. OPINION PIECES

- "Violence in Iraq does not stop and harasses the White House"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (10/20) "Only 19 days away from elections, which could deprive US President Bush of his real power until the end of his term in office, he acknowledged that prevailing violence in Iraq has some similarities with the Vietnam war...

"He made this surprising statement at a crucial moment - more than 71 US soldiers died last month in Iraq - one of the highest numbers this year. According to the US military command in Baghdad, the strategy adopted to appease the Iraqi capital city has been counterproductive, and Democrats are increasingly confident that they will win elections...

"... Only two-and-a-half weeks away from elections..., the US political and electoral dynamics seems to have reversed the prevailing trend of the 2002 legislative elections and the 2004 presidential elections. Now, Democrats are the ones who have shifted the blame on Republicans for a 'failure' in Iraq and accused Bush of incompetence."

- "The Coalition of the Vulnerable"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" carries an op-ed story by Juan Gabriel Tokatlán, professor of International Relations at Universidad San Andrés, who opines (10/20) "... The boom of fundamentalist terrorism, Western powers' military deployment in the Middle East and Central Asia, the persistence of long-lasting ethnical conflicts and armed confrontations, the persistent degradation of civil wars in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the global destabilizing consequences of the US hegemony strategy, the regional and international uncertainty vis-à-vis the irruption of emerging powers, a fast-moving destruction of the environment everywhere, the dangerous weakening of multilateralism and the explosive increase in inequality make up a lethal combination that could increase the use of force.

"... In brief, both the global and regional scenarios call for urgent awareness and greater activism against war and violence. Vis-à-vis the recurring call, from Iraq to Haiti, to make up a 'Coalition of the Willing' to fight terrorism and impose changes of regimes, the time has come to make up a 'Coalition of the Vulnerable' among all those who have been, are, and potentially will be direct victims of abusive use of force, manipulation of humanitarian international law and the cloudy practices of 'real politik.'

"This means going beyond state diplomacy - many times, our precarious States may not (and sometimes they do not want to) criticize the logic of the powerful. This is why the time has come to foster citizens' diplomacy.

"I understand that this diplomacy could be carried out by non governmental, unarmed groups who can benignly take over a role that traditionally belongs to the State and set out new alliances with the international civil society."

- "'We expect a broader GMO range'"

Juan Martinez Dodda, columnist of "InfoCampo," an agricultural supplement of business-financial, center-right "InfoBae," writes (10/20) "Ten years after the first transgenic crops were sowed, US academician and geneticist Wayne Parrot has come to Argentina. During his visit, he lectured on the history and the new trends in biotechnology, he presented compiled data from his ten years of work at the Argentine Congress in order to 'clarify some concepts on genetic modification.'

"Parrot predicted that in the upcoming years there will be a much broader range of features in transgenic crops, which will add to new developments in resilience to insects and herbicides."

13. EDITORIALS

- "Tough electoral confrontation in Ecuador"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" editorializes (10/20) "Last Sunday's first round of presidential elections in Ecuador attracted the region's attention, not only due to the political division which is typical of the country but also because of the diametrically-opposed political proposals that will polarize runoff elections.

"Protected by Hugo Chavez, we have Rafael Correa, a noisy left-wing nationalist. According to opinion surveys, he was going to win the first round. His competitor is conservative billionaire Alvaro Noboa...

"Obviously enough, the proposals from Noboa and Correa are radically different. Noboa is virulently anti-Chavez. So much so that he has promised that as soon as he wins elections he will cut ties with Cuba and Venezuela. Being pro-market economy, Noboa will attempt to capture domestic and foreign investment in order to create the best possible business climate. For this purpose, he will try to reach an FTA with the US, something Colombia and Peru have already done...

"His main opponent, Rafael Correa..., is against reaching an FTA with the US, he has suggested not to honor the country's foreign debt and to increase taxes and royalties on foreign corporations, particularly oil corporations. He thinks that the FARC are not a terrorist organization, he promised to close the Manta US Navy base and suggested that he could un-dollarize the economy.

"Once again, in what appears as a chain of failures, the big defeated of this first round in elections has been Venezuelan Hugo Chavez. His interventionist policies and authoritarian proposals seem to scare away voters. Just like in Peru and Mexico, this also appears to have been the case in Ecuador.

"... Once again, the Ecuadorian political scenario suggests that whoever takes office will have to lead a coalition government, in an environment of probable instability and a country divided, with confronted positions."

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